

Division of Behavioral Health Services

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TO: RBHA and TRBHA Medical Directors and Clinical Leadership

FROM: Dan Wendt
ADHS/DBHS Policy Office Manager

SUBJECT: POLICY CLARIFICATION: APPOINTMENT STANDARDS FOR REFERRALS OF PERSONS NEEDING PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS

DATE: April 19, 2004

This memorandum is intended to reiterate the responsibilities of Tribal and Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (T/RBHA) and their subcontracted behavioral health providers (hereafter providers) in meeting required appointment standards for referrals of persons being treated with or determined to be in need of psychotropic medications.

As described in the Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS) Provider Manual, Section 3.2, *Appointment Standards and Timeliness of Service*, T/RBHAs or providers must assess the urgency of a person's need for medication immediately upon referral and if clinically indicated, provide an appointment with an individual qualified to prescribe psychotropic medications within a timeframe indicated by the person's clinical need.

Although the maximum number of days for meeting the appointment standard for referrals of persons needing psychotropic medications, including but not limited to referrals from primary care providers, is 30 days from the referral or the initial request for services, providers must secure earlier appointments for persons when clinically indicated. Providers must ensure that the person is scheduled for an appointment with an individual qualified to prescribe psychotropic medications within a timeframe that assures:

- The person does not run out of any prescribed psychotropic medications; or
- The person is evaluated for the need to start medications to ensure that the person does not experience a decline in their behavioral health condition.

As clinically indicated, persons should be directly referred to an individual qualified to prescribe psychotropic medications. Please note that the person's intake enrollment date should correspond with the date in which the first service was received.

It is imperative that T/RBHA staff and their subcontracted providers have knowledge of and perform in accordance with ADHS/DBHS policy. Please ensure that the information contained in this memorandum is communicated to all relevant internal and subcontracted personnel. If you have any questions regarding this policy clarification, please contact me at (602) 364-4660.